

HR Newsletter

BLM/NPS/BIA-
NIFC

Federal Benefits in the News

The following information was posted on the Fedsmith website on March 11, 2008

Follow-Up: FERS Unused Sick Leave Bill

The bill that would compensate FERS employees for part of their unused sick leave at retirement was introduced in March by Rep. James P Moran Jr. (D-Va).

Currently, employees covered by FERS do not have a sick leave benefit. This, according to the representative who introduced the bill, encourages people to call in sick in the months before they retire.

Data examined by OPM revealed that FERS employees eligible to retire use, on average, 20.2 hours more sick leave annually than employees in the older retirement system. FERS employees nearing the time of retirement use an average of 13.5 hours more sick leave annually.

Concerned with the FERS use-it-or-lose-it approach hurts productivity and Moran hopes to create an incentive for FERS employees to build up sick leave balances.

Under the proposal, FERS employees would be eligible for a lump sum payment of up to \$10,000 for their unused sick leave.

The proposed benefit would apply to accrued sick leave exceeding 500 hours. That would ensure that employees have at least that much sick leave available for illness, injury or disability. Employees would receive 15% of the value of their remaining sick leave.

For example, a federal employee earning about \$75,000 with 1250 hours of sick leave saved up would receive a \$4,000 lump-sum payment upon retirement under the proposal.

The bill will be sent to the Congressional Budget Office for cost estimates. If the proposed bill is too expensive, it may be scaled down.

Health Insurance Proposal

Children of federally employed parents lose their government-sponsored health insurance coverage at 22, but Rep. Danny K. Davis (D-Ill) would like to extend the maximum age for dependents to age 25. At a house

hearing last week, Davis announced plans for legislature to change the age restriction in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. He said young adults are the fastest-growing age group among the uninsured, and that many 22 yr olds are in temporary positions and low-wage jobs and find it difficult to afford health care.

Raising the maximum age for dependent coverage "will increase worker morale" and help create "a more family-friendly environment for federal employees." Davis said.

Davis is chairman of the House federal workforce subcommittee.

Volume 5, Issue 4
March 2008

Special points of interest:

- *FSA Information: March 15 is the last day to incur grace period expenses using your 2007 accounts.*



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TSP & Taxes

The following is information from TSP:

TSP is taxed deferred– When you prepare your 2007 tax return, remember that your taxable wages reported on your W-2 form will be different from your annual salary.

Your contributions to the TSP are tax-deferred and are not considered part of your income for Federal income tax purposes.

Paying less tax on your current income is just one of the benefits of the TSP.

Tax credit– If you participated in the TSP during tax year 2007, you may be eligible for the Retirement Savings Contribution Credit, which is available to participants with a 2007 adjusted gross income of no more than \$52,000 if married filing jointly, \$39,000 if head of household, or \$26,000 if single or married and filing separately.

For more information, consult a tax advisor.



HR Q & A section

From time to time we get a question that is asked by several employees, therefore, we have decided to devote a section in our newsletter to answer these types of questions. We hope employees find this information helpful.



Q. What do I do if I served on Jury Duty and receive a check in the mail from the State of Idaho?

When employees are called to jury duty, that time away from their job is coded as such that they do not lose any pay, therefore, if an employee receives a check from the state for their jury duty participation, they are to cash the check, then write a check from their personal account back to the government, minus the mileage.

The check is to be mailed to the following address:

BLM Employees—
Denver Federal Center
Building 50
Denver, CO 80225
Attn: OC-652 collections

NPS Employees—
AOC (Accounting Operations Center)
Accounting Team
P.O. Box 100000
Herndon, VA 20171

BIA Employees—
NBC ATTN: BIA Collection Office
Mail Stop D-2770
7301 Mansfield Avenue, Denver CO 80235

Retirement Checklist

The following is from a article posted on Government Executive.com on March 14, 08 by Tammy Flanagan.

The following is a brief checklist of items to think about once you have decided on a retirement date.

- Complete your retirement application
- Request a final retirement estimate from HR from your annuity
- Make decision regarding any service credit payments that are outstanding
- Divorced, consider the implications
- Request state taxes be withheld
- Withdrawing your TSP
- Contact the Social Security Administration
- Reevaluate your insurance needs
- Make sure you are eligible for your Federal Employee Health Benefits Plan Coverage into retirement

For the complete article, visit www.govexec.com, then click on "Retirement Planning".



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We're on the Web!

http://www.blm.gov/nifc/st/en/prog/fire/more/human_resources.html

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

EAP Consultants Inc. is a free employee assistance online resource.

To check out the articles and news on the EAP Consultants Inc. website, visit:

www.eapconsultants.com

(password: NIFC)

Or, you can contact them 24 hours per day at:

1-800-869-0276.

You will need to identify yourself as a "NIFC" employee.

For questions regarding EAP, contact Sheri Kososik at X5527.

New Hires

Nancy Hunt—BIA
Boone Zimmerlee—FA321

Departures

German Rodriguez

Retirements

Linda Swain
Ben Wiederkehr